

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
F	342



City Lexington

Address 16-18-20 Vine Street

Historic Name First Town Hall/High

School Building

Use: Present residential (apartments)

Original town hall/school

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1846

Source Hudson 1913, I, p. xviii

Style Altered beyond recognition

Architect Isaac Melvin

Exterior wall fabric wood clapboard

Outbuildings

Major alterations (with dates) gabled roof cut down; portico, Ionic columns, and pediment removed; long round-headed windows replaced (1902)

from east side of Massachusetts Avenue  
Moved near intersection of Date 1902  
Woburn Street (site of Muzzey Junior H)  
Approx. acreage 27870 ft.<sup>2</sup> (with 10-12-14)

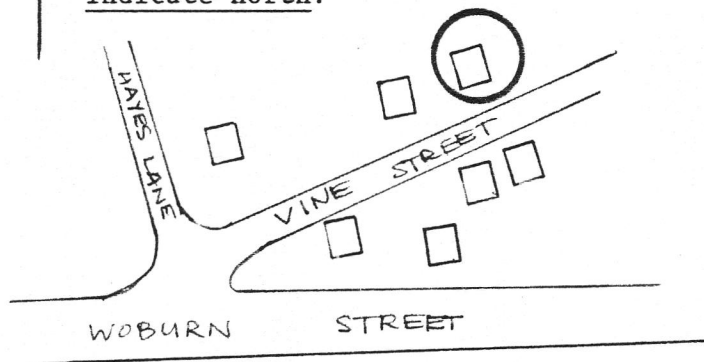
Setting On narrow back street; near

many modest nineteenth-century workers

houses.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date April, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

This tenement with its bulky rectangular profile seems out of scale in comparison with the small workers cottages close by. The building was actually moved to this site from elsewhere in Lexington where it was the central portion of Lexington's first town hall and high school, built in 1846. Photographs of the original building indicate none of its exterior finishes survive: the entire entablature and pediment with dentil course were removed and replaced with the truncated gable roof now there; the four Ionic columns of the original

(see Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The building originally stood on Massachusetts Avenue on the site now occupied by Muzzey Junior High School and was built in 1846 as Lexington's first town hall. It was designed by Isaac Melvin, a Lexington architect who also designed the Stone Building (1833) and the First Parish Church (1847), and built by David A. Tuttle, a prominent nineteenth-century Lexington builder.

When Lexington established its first high school in 1854, classes were initially held in this central portion of the town hall building. According to one of the original students, the first classroom was on the second floor, a room she called the "attic" -- 30 feet long, 22 feet wide, windows only at one end, and heated by a stove in the corner (Hudson 1903:118-120). The second year the classroom was moved to the larger and better ventilated room downstairs and, after Lexington built another town hall in 1871, the high school took over the entire building.

By the end of the nineteenth century the high school was badly in need of renovations and repairs; it was condemned in 1896 by the State Inspector as unfit for further use and finally, in 1902, replaced by a new high school on the same site -- the building that later became Muzzey Junior High School. The old high school was purchased by W.E. Denham, cut apart, and moved to Vine Street where it became tenements; this building was the central portion of the old one.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

David A. Tuttle papers. Lexington Historical Society archives.

Hudson, Charles. History of the Town of Lexington, revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society, Volume I, p. xviii. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

Hudson, Mary E. "Early Days of the Lexington High School," 1903. Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society, Volume III, pp. 117-133. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Historical Society, 1905.

Kelley, Beverly Allison. Lexington, A Century of Photographs, p. 62. Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Historical Society, 1980.

"Lexington Has Always Been Proud of Its Schools." Lexington Minute Man, December 30, 1971.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lexington	Form No: 342
Property Name: 16-18-20 Vine Street	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

portico were reused at the entrances of Muzzey Junior High School; and the original, long round-headed windows were placed with the present ones. A current tenant reported that no original interior finishes survive.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom